

Atlanta Police Department
Policy ManualStandard Operating
ProcedureEffective Date
April 26, 2021APD.SOP.2011
General Conduct

Applicable To: All employees

Review: 2025

Approval Authority: Chief Rodney Bryant

Signature: Signed by RB

Date Signed: 4/26/2021

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1. PURPOSE

This written directive establishes the guidelines and operating procedures for all departmental employees while interacting with each other and the public at large.

2. POLICY

Employees will conduct themselves professionally and courteously when answering the telephone or greeting visitors at Departmental facilities. This procedure includes interactions with fellow employees and with members of the public. Employees will make every effort to provide needed assistance without rudeness or undue delay.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Division commanders will monitor their subordinates' interaction with other employees and with the public to ensure that this procedure is followed.
- 3.2 Supervisors will enforce this procedure with their subordinates. They will set the standard for courtesy and provide a model for their subordinates to emulate.
- 3.3 Employees will conduct themselves professionally and courteously, to promote good public relations and to project a positive image.

4. ACTION**4.1 Office Courtesy**

- 4.1.1 Supervisors will ensure that work sites are staffed, and telephones are answered during the working hours of the work site, unless approved otherwise by the division commander.



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4.1.2 General Considerations

1. Employees will make every effort to answer each call and greet each visitor in a courteous and efficient manner. The employee greeting the visitor or caller will attempt to handle the request personally, but if the employee is unable to supply the requested information or service, he or she will make sure that the office or person to whom he or she refers the call is the appropriate one.
2. Answer all calls and greet all visitors immediately.
3. Do not use slang or profanity.
4. Keep current Department and City government telephone listings and a message pad at each telephone location.

4.1.3 Telephone calls

1. Greet callers courteously with a statement identifying the work site and the title and name of the person answering. For example, "Good morning, this is the Corporate Services Section, Ms. Holmes speaking." Or, "Atlanta Police, Zone One, Sergeant Jones speaking."
2. If the person asked for is unavailable, offer to either take a message or allow them to leave a voicemail. If it is necessary, that the caller must wait place the caller on hold. If the call has not been picked up after a reasonable time, ask if the caller wants to continue holding or to leave a message.
3. If it is necessary to transfer the call, inform the caller that he or she is being transferred and state the office and telephone number to which the call is being transferred. Stay on the line to be sure that the call goes through correctly.
4. Personal information about an employee will not be given out over the phone. Home phone numbers or addresses are not to be released outside the chain of command unless approved by a supervisor. If the caller identifies himself or herself as an employee of the Department and wants this personal information, refer him or her to the Personnel Services Unit.

4.1.4 Responding to Telephone Calls and Mail

1. When possible, requests for information or action by telephone will be responded to immediately. When the person receiving the call must take a message for the intended recipient, the message must be thorough and include a callback number and the date and time it was taken. The message must be delivered and responded to within 2 business days of the original call.
2. The section commander or designee will return telephone calls within twenty-four (24) hours.
3. Requests for information or action by mail or fax will be responded to within three business days. These requests will be logged, indicate the date of receipt, to whom forwarded for response, and the date of response.



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4. All sections will maintain a log in which all incoming telephone calls and written correspondences are entered, which will be kept at the work site for at least 12 months.
5. The section commander will review the log to ensure compliance.
6. The log will contain the following:
 - a. Date of correspondence
 - b. Time received
 - c. Identification of correspondent
 1. Name
 2. Telephone Number
 - d. Subject matter
 - e. Action taken

4.1.5 Visitors

1. Greet visitors courteously and call the appropriate staff member on the intercom to notify them of the visitor. If the staff member is unavailable, offer to take a message or find someone else who can help him or her. If there will be a wait, estimate how long it will be and offer the visitor a seat.
2. If a visitor must be referred to another office, be sure that the directions are clear. If the destination is in the same building, consider escorting the visitor to minimize confusion.

4.1.6 Messages

Take a full message, with the name of the caller or visitor, his or her organization and telephone number, the date and time, and any message the caller or visitor wants to relay. Sign or initial the message. Put the message where the intended recipient will readily see it or deliver the message.

4.1.7 Urgent Communications

Be responsive to the urgency of visitors and callers; if the matter is urgent, ask them if they need to interrupt a meeting or page the person they need. It is generally appropriate to interrupt a meeting for the person's supervisor but ask the person's supervisor first. If a call or visit is urgent, make extra effort to find the appropriate person.

4.1.8 E-mail

City e-mail accounts will be checked by all employees at least once within each 24-hour period, during the course of his or her shift or as frequently as the employees' assignment dictates. Employees will immediately check his or her city e-mail account upon return from approved leave i.e. vacation, sick leave etc.



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4.2 Use of Tobacco or Tobacco Products

4.2.1 Employees will not use any tobacco or tobacco products while interacting with or in the view of the general public.

4.2.2 Use of Tobacco in Department Facilities

1. Use of any type of tobacco product is prohibited in any building, office, work area, or other structure, which is owned, leased, or in any manner operated under the control of the Atlanta Police Department.
2. All employees and visitors will abide by the posted designations. Persons who refuse compliance may be charged with violating Section 106-9 of the City of Atlanta Code or Section 16-12-2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia.

4.2.3 Use of any type of tobacco product is prohibited in vehicles that are owned, leased, or in any manner operated under the control of the Atlanta Police Department.

4.3 Cellular Phone Use while on Duty

4.3.1 Employees are authorized to use cell phones to conduct Departmental business.

1. Employees will not use cellular telephones to conduct Departmental business that should otherwise be broadcast over the radio.
2. Cellular telephones may be used to allow additional communication between employees but does not relieve the officer from using the radio for disseminating and documenting information.

4.3.2 Employees will not use a cellular phone for personal business while interacting with the general public.

4.3.3 Employees will not use a cellular phone, with or without a hands free option, while directing traffic.

4.4 Audio, Video or Photographic Recording

4.4.1 All employees shall be prohibited from interfering with a citizen's right to record police activity by photographic, video, or audio means. This prohibition is in effect only as long as the recording by the citizen does not physically interfere with the performance of an officer's duties.

This Subsection, 4.4.1, may not be deleted, revised, or amended pursuant to the May 13, 2015 Order in Anderson v. City of Atlanta, et al. 1:11-CV-03398-SCJ. Consult the City of Atlanta Department of Law with any questions or concerns.

***This Section 4.4.1, may not be deleted, revised, or amended pursuant to the November 29, 2018 Order in Calhoun, et al. v. Pennington, et al. 1:09-CV-3286-TCB. Consult the City of Atlanta Department of Law with any questions or concerns. ***

4.4.2 All employees shall be prohibited from intentionally deleting or destroying the original or sole copy of any photograph, audio, or video recording of police activity created by a member of the public.



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This Subsection, 4.4.2, may not be deleted, revised, or amended pursuant to the May 13, 2015 Order in Anderson v. City of Atlanta, et al. 1:11-CV-03398-SCJ. Consult the City of Atlanta Department of Law with any questions or concerns.

- 4.4.3 All employees shall be prohibited from intentionally deleting or destroying the original or sole copy of any photograph, audio, or video recording relating to any use of force described under the “Reporting Requirements” section of APD.SOP.3010 Use of Force.

This Subsection, 4.4.3, may not be deleted, revised, or amended pursuant to the May 13, 2015 Order in Anderson v. City of Atlanta, et al. 1:11-CV-03398-SCJ. Consult the City of Atlanta Department of Law with any questions or concerns.

- 4.4.4 All employees (sworn and non-sworn) are prohibited from using personal recording devices; such as a cellular telephone, camera, video camera, sound recording device etc. to record pictures, sounds, or video during the course of their duties.

- 4.4.5 Failure to comply with section 4.4.4 of this directive will result in the seizure of the device in order to ensure the preservation of any improperly obtained photos, videos, audio recording, etc.

5. DEFINITIONS

Departmental Business: Any communication related to the affairs of the Departments and or the City to include but not limited to the following: investigations, personnel supervision, labor relations, bureau, division, section and unit administration, manpower allocation and activities, etc.

6 CANCELLATIONS

APD.SOP.2011 “General Conduct”; effective January 17, 2019.

7. REFERENCES

May 13, 2015 Order in Anderson v. City of Atlanta, et al. 1:11-CV-03398-SCJ

November 29, 2018 Order in Calhoun, et al. v. Pennington, et al. 1:09-CV-3286-TCB

APD.SOP.2010 “Work Rules”
APD.SOP.3010 “Use of Force”

O.C.G.A Code Section 16-12-2

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) 6th Edition Standard 81.2.11

City of Atlanta Ordinance 106-9

8. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

No change to content.